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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002504

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/18/2008

TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: TURKS AND ISRAELIS SAY THEY ARE PLEASED WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER SHALOM'S VISIT TO TURKEY

REF: TEL AVIV 1959

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch for reasons
1.5 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (C) Summary: The Israeli Embassy used terms like "positive, excellent," and Turkish MFA "successful" to describe Israeli Foreign Minister Shalom's first official visit to Turkey April 13-14. End summary.

[12.](#) (C) Israeli DCM Nahshon told us April 15 plans for FonMin Shalom's April 13-14 visit had been in suspense a "long time" -- the last time an Israeli FonMin visited Turkey was during Turkish FonMin Cem's tenure, more than a year ago. Nahshon averred that the two countries share interests in many fields. He noted Israel accepted "with gratitude" Turkey's offer to play "any role" it could in the Middle East Peace Negotiations, although nothing formal is envisioned currently. Turkish MFA Levant desk officer Demirok told us Shalom began his travel with a private visit with the Jewish community in Istanbul prior to his official meetings with President Sezer P.M. Erdogan and FonMin Gul.

[13.](#) (C) Nahshon and Demirok noted discussions also focused on working together on water projects in Turkey's GAP region. The two counties expect to sign a bilateral agreement in May to transport 50 million cubic meters of water/year for 20 years from Manavgat, Turkey, to an Israeli port, most likely Haifa. Israel plans to offer the water shipping contract for public tender.

[14.](#) (C) Nahshon said Israel and Turkey have different perspectives, but not necessarily different opinions, regarding terrorism emanating from Syria and Lebanon. Assuring us Turkey is justified in embarking on new dialogue with Syria, he said that as a result of Shalom's visit Israel understood the Turks would visit Syria to "understand the Syrian mind and to tell them they are making a mistake in their current policy."

[15.](#) (C) Comment: Prevailing wisdom in Ankara is that, while the AK government does not want to be seen by its conservative grass roots to be embracing Israel, Erdogan and Gul now recognize relations with Israel are an untouchable equity of the Turkish military. End comment.
PEARSON